

Orlando poised for M&S growth

Orlando, Fla., economic development officials say their region, already regarded as the biggest hub for military training and simulation in the world, could stretch its muscles even more as manufacturing jobs increase amid an already-strong engineering presence in the area.

The Orlando region, which has about 150 companies and roughly 17,000 industry employees involved in military and commercial training and simulation, according to local officials, has always been strong on the services side, said Russ Hauck, executive director of the National Center for Simulation, which is based in the city. "But now we're seeing more manufacturing being done here than has ever been before," he said.

Hauck said he believes Orlando has been too skewed on the services' side of modeling and simulation, but a homegrown manufacturing base — bolstered in part by a wave of incoming medical simulation-related jobs — bodes well for diversity for the future.

Medical simulation has a promising future, Hauck said, and the central Florida region is moving to grab a good share of the market. The University of Central Florida is building a new medical school, the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command has increased medical simulation

work, and companies such as Forterra Systems are establishing a presence locally. And the Department of Veterans Affairs is building a new hospital.

"All of that will touch Orlando in many different ways and that will include simulation," said Jackie Kelvington, a consultant for the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission.

The Army's Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training & Instrumentation is based in Orlando, and its annual control over military contracts is expected to increase to about \$3 billion annually over the next few years. That office drives much training and simulation spending within the service and, combined with having the Naval Air Warfare Center's Training Systems Division and the Marine Corp Systems Command Program Manager for Training Systems based there, puts Orlando in good shape, according to Hauck.

Hauck said he wants to conduct an impact study next year of the region to more fully determine how many simulation-related jobs there are in Orlando and a breakdown of those jobs.

Although a rivalry of some sorts has developed over the past few years in developing jobs within the training and simulation industry with the Hampton Roads region of Virginia — Suffolk, Va., is

home to U.S. Joint Forces Command — Hauck said it is "a healthy competition" between the regions. "Some say we're doing different things; others say Orlando is trying to grab all the glory," Hauck said with a smile.

Orlando's perception, he added, is that it is more a research and development area for training devices, while southeastern Virginia concentrates more on exercise and experimentation.

But Hauck said officials, including politicians, from the two areas are developing good relationships, and a team of military leaders from "Team Orlando" — which comprises the local senior military leaders in Orlando from the four services — visited the Hampton Roads region recently to make sure "we're not stepping on each other's toes."

Hauck said he doesn't believe Joint Forces Command wants to be in the acquisition business, "so there's a role there for Orlando to play."

Growth in military simulation jobs has been steady since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, but that almost assuredly cannot continue at the same pace, Hauck said. So Orlando is looking to widen its modeling and simulation market beyond the Defense Department. That effort includes the gaming industry, civilian medical simulation technology and the entertainment industry.

Quick Quotes

From the 30th anniversary IMAGE 2007 conference in Scottsdale, Ariz., in July.

"IG capacity is now exceeding what can be built at acceptable cost. It's no longer 'can my system take it?' It's 'can I afford to build it?'"

Philippe Perey

Keynote speaker and CAE engineering director of visualization products

"Realism is in the eye of the modeler, his or her boss, and ultimately the customer."

Gary Lynch

U.S. Coastal & Hydraulics Laboratory engineer

"Hoo-ah!"

Conference attendee at the back of the room, responding to a speaker comment that Rockwell Collins' EP-1000 and EPX-5000 systems are the only remaining custom-built image generators

Soldiers interact with Iraqis — portrayed by role players — at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

into the rotational exercises via scenarios involving multinational operations. Those training exercises typically extend for 1 days but have stretched to 2 days since November 2003 because of the war in Iraq. Cubi said it employs about 1,500 full and part-time people to support the JRTC.

Cubic wins new deal for U.S. Army training

The U.S. Army has awarded Cubic Corp. another contract that could extend to 10 years and be worth \$468 million to provide realistic predeployment training to troops at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, La.

The new contract took effect in July and follows on the heels of a similar contract that kicked in during 2001 at the JRTC and was valued at about \$375 million. Under the new award, Cubic Applications Inc. will increase support



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levels in the areas of role playing, battlefield effects, tactical engagement systems support and exercise support groups. Those missions provide support to rotating units for transportation, sustain-

ment supplies, live-fire support and air-delivered resupply.

Cubic Application's job as JRTC mission support contractor will be to assist the center in fully integrating all participants